The rooms at New York's Pierre are incredibly luxurious.

The **Steigenberger Reservation Service** (800-223-5652; in New York, 212-583-2958) handles bookings at Stockholm's *Grand* hotel, the *Peninsula*, and the *Negresco* in Nice. Anguilla's *Malliouhana*; *La Samanna* in St. Martin; and England's *Chewton Glen* can be booked through **David B. Mitchell & Co., Inc.** (800-372-1323; in New York, 212-696-1323). **Trusthouse Forte** (800-CALL-THF) is the reservation service for Toronto's *King Edward* hotel, the *Grosvenor House* in London, and the *George V*. □

FREE TRAVELER'S CHECKS

The projected expense of a vacation overseas is sometimes enough to make a traveler unpack his suitcases before even setting foot out the door. But cutting back on unnecessary expenditures is the first step toward making the dollar go farther abroad.

Traveler's checks from banks or travel companies can often be had without the standard 1% commission tacked on: Thomas Cook traveler's checks, for example, are available without a service charge through Deak, Inc., offices as well as through Thomas Cook Travel outlets for travelers purchasing air tickets. Some other traveler's checks — Bank of America, Citibank, Visa, and American Express — are frequently offered at no charge as part of an individual bank's policy for preferred customers. American Express also has a special deal whereby members of the American Automobile Association can acquire their traveler's checks through AAA without paying a fee. □

TRAVELER'S RIGHTS: LOST LUGGAGE

The number of air traveler complaints to the Department of Transportation about lost luggage and other problems increased by more than 60% during 1987. The trend threatens to continue: In the first three months of 1988 there were more than 1,650 complaints, an increase of 500 over the same period in 1987. Such dismaying statistics make every passenger wonder if checking baggage is worth the risk these days.

The best way to ensure that luggage arrives safely is to carry it on board. When that's not possible, however, travelers should know the regulations regarding lost luggage compensation.

If bags are lost and never recovered, the liability on domestic flights is limited by law to $1,250 per person. Before any compensation is made, however, the passenger will almost always be asked to verify both the contents of his bags and their value, as well as the value of the bags themselves (a basic list will help, but a photograph of the contents and bag is even better). If your personal belongings are worth more than $1,250, you may want to purchase additional luggage insurance available from the airlines in most airport terminals.

In the event that luggage has been delayed but not lost, most airlines will reimburse a small percentage of emergency purchases. TWA, for example, after the first 24 hours, allows $35 per day, with a three-day limit.

If your bag does not arrive when you do, be sure to fill out a tracer form with the airline before leaving the airport. If the unthinkable occurs and your bags are never recovered, most airlines require that you file a formal claim listing the value of the contents and of the bags. Under normal circumstances, a check will arrive within four to six weeks for the value of the claim, less a percentage for depreciation. □

BARGAINS AT NEW YORK'S BEST RESTAURANTS

One good way to sample several of New York City's top restaurants without going broke is to take advantage of prix fixe lunch and dinner menus. Even such world-famous dining places as *Lutèce*, *La Côte Basque*, *The Four Seasons*, the *Russian Tea Room*, *La Caravelle*, and *Tavern on the Green* offer complete meals for reasonable fixed prices ($35 for lunch Tuesdays through Fridays at Lutèce; $33 for lunch and $53 for dinner at La Côte Basque; $40.50 for pre- and posttheater dinner, before 6:15 P.M. or after 10:30 P.M., at The Four Seasons; from $38 to $45 for dinner, from 4:30 P.M. to 9 P.M., at the Russian Tea Room; $31 for lunch and $35 for pretheater dinner, before 6:30 P.M., at La Caravelle; and from $14.50 to $17.50 for dinner before

Enjoy some borscht and a blintz at the Russian Tea Room before or after the show.

6:15 P.M., Mondays through Fridays at Tavern on the Green). These prices do not include drinks, tax, or tips. Check ahead for other requirements when making reservations. □

Ultra Lights: 6 mg "tar" 0.6 mg nicotine – Lights Box: 10 mg "tar" 0.7 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, by FTC method. Lights Soft: 10 mg "tar" 0.7 mg nicotine – 100's: 16 mg "tar" 1.0 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Feb.'85. 2

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The Best Bistros in Paris

Benoît, a plant-filled spot that serves traditional Lyonnais dishes, is an outstanding bistro, where one can eat very well for reasonable prices.

Many gastronomes consider Paris the culinary capital of the world, though the recent decline of the U.S. dollar has made sampling a three-star meal in the City of Light an experience few can afford. Fortunately, Paris also boasts a bountiful number of fine, far less expensive bistros where the hearty meals may be a tad less haute, but the quality of the cooking and the warmth of the welcome are absolutely *merveilleux*. Here are two bistros that represent the best of Paris:

La Coquille — 6 Rue du Débarcadère, 17e; 45-74-25-95. The service is warm and unpretentious and the food is always good. The house specialty is, naturally, coquilles St Jacques — giant scallops baked with butter, shallots, and parsley. Expensive to moderate.

L'Ami Louis — 32 Rue du Vertbois, 3e; 48-87-77-48. Although the great chef Antoine Magrin died last year, his nondescript premises in the middle of the Marais still serves superb food: foie gras, roast chicken, and shoestring potatoes, all perfectly complemented by excellent Burgundy wines. Expensive to moderate.

Allard — 41 Rue St André-des-Arts, 6e; 43-26-48-23. Ideally located on the

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Urban Escapes

A Select Guide to Weekend Retreats

Within only a few hours' drive of virtually every major urban center lie some of the most compelling resorts in the nation. Retreats of extraordinary natural beauty, with plenty of indoor comforts, outdoor activities, and excellent dining, are well within range of the knowing weekender.

NEW YORK

Some 200 miles north of Manhattan, but well worth the journey, is the Otesaga hotel (Box 311, Lake St., Cooperstown, NY 13326; 607-547-9931). The town itself is the dictionary description of all American. There is the Baseball Hall of Fame, the

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Seaside Victoriana: The Mainstay Inn on Cape May.

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